

sign of a lack of vitamin A in the whole system. Even if the tendency to night-blindness is so slight as to be hardly noticeable, this lack of vitamin A may lead to other symptoms which are not unimportant.

First, a general tiredness, lack of spirits, nervousness, occasional headaches, frequent colds, lowered resistance to infection, extreme sensibility to cold, falling out of the hair, bad condition of the nails, a dry skin, dental decay, eye-strain, dizziness, irritated and inflamed eyes. These symptoms often occur in the Spring, or become worse at that time of year if they have already been present before. All or certain of these symptoms may be accompanied by slight night-blindness, and they disappear after a treatment of vitamin A, the night-blindness being the last to go.

No doubt more than one mother of a family will think "In our case, this inability to see very well in the dark is not very important: we have good wholesome food." But I should reply: "Can you really be so sure of that? Are you never tired, do your children never have colds, are their teeth quite sound? Does nobody in the household have headaches? And the old people, are they ailing?" You will certainly have to answer "yes" to some of these questions. I only want to tell you that often too little attention is paid to these slight ailments; people are so used to them, that it seems normal not to be in perfect health, especially old people. And yet this is not necessarily the case.

In a great many cases, all that is needed is a diet more rich in vitamin A. But don't imagine that everything will be changed at a stroke. If for years you have had a faulty diet, you will have to be patient. Don't think that you will be full of health and strength because you have had a rich diet of vitamin A for a week. Nor should those who wish to keep their good health forget all about it once the danger is passed.

But you will ask: "What food should I give my family in order to be sure that they are getting enough vitamin A?" Naturally, that depends on how much you are able to spend on meals. Foods rich in this vitamin are usually expensive. One consolation is that you can manage with less vitamin A if your meals are varied and rich in other vitamins.

I should recommend you to eat only whole-wheat and rye-bread, which is no dearer than white bread. Bread is our principal food, and for that reason it is extremely important. Vitamin A is found in the vegetable kingdom as well as in the animal kingdom. It is found in the sea, especially in the small green sea-weeds.

In plants, it exists particularly in the green parts, for instance, in cabbage, spinach, lettuce and green salads, green-beans, and in everything green; in the yellow or yellow-red fruits, such as tomatoes; and in carrots. Vitamin A when found in plants is in the preliminary stage; in animals it is transformed into the perfect state. Animals eat the plants containing the vitamin, which is deposited in the various organs, especially the liver, and in the milk.

The proportion of vitamin A in animal foodstuffs varies greatly. It is especially high in summer, when the animals have an abundance of green fodder.

The principal foodstuffs which contain vitamin A are milk, cream, butter and cheese. Vitamin A is found in the cream, but not in skimmed milk or whey. It is also found in margarine which has now been vitaminised,

and in eggs, fish-roe, liver, kidneys and other entrails, to a lesser degree in meat, although not in pork, in the oily fishes such as eels and herrings, in fish-liver, and in cod-liver oil, which is the richest vitamin A-containing food that we have.

It will be seen that it is not an easy task to provide one's family with vitamin A both in winter and summer. Vitamin A may be cooked, but it is destroyed when fatty foodstuffs are over-roasted.

It would certainly be to our great advantage to consider cod-liver oil as a food and not only as a medicine. Healthy children during the growing age should be given a teaspoonful every day, or the corresponding quantity of the oil in concentrated form if they do not like the taste of the ordinary oil. Healthy children do not all need the same quantity of vitamin A. The need is increased during infectious illnesses.

Sick and convalescent persons should have a diet that is abundant in vitamin A, so that their powers of resistance are not still further reduced.

In planning meals for yourself and your family, it is important that you should include every day several foodstuffs containing vitamin A.

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## EYESIGHT IN THE ARMY.

Adequate eyesight is a vital requirement for a soldier, and the Army has made available all the latest scientific equipment to assist the ophthalmological branch of the R.A.M.C.

At one big military hospital in the Northern Command recently visited, reports the *Yorkshire Post*, all the latest eye equipment had been provided; some, in fact, that was still not to be found in many civilian hospitals. The Army realises the importance of careful attention to a man's eyesight, and has called in some of the best ophthalmic specialists in the country, including several of world-wide repute.

Much of the work is concerned with examining men for spectacles. In the Northern Command alone, over 4,000 cases are dealt with a month. Of the 19 age group, only 5 or 6 per cent. were sent up for examination, but from the 35's as many as 20 per cent. in some units needed attention.

### Plastic Lenses.

On an average, it has been found that for two-thirds of all men inspected spectacles will give definite improvement to their sight. These somewhat large percentages do not signify a general deterioration of eyesight, but are probably due to a greater appreciation of defects caused by the increased necessity of good sight in this mechanical age.

Every soldier needing glasses is provided with two pairs, so that if one is broken when he is in action, he has a spare pair handy. At first there was considerable difficulty, because ordinary glasses cannot be worn with a gas-mask, as they prevent the face-piece fitting tightly to the side of the face.

Soldiers' spectacles are, therefore, manufactured with thin, flat sides. Experiments have been made with plastic lenses, but it has been found that they are too readily scratched, and further experiments are now being instituted to get plastic lenses with a harder surface.

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